

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

**DRAFT**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Sacramento City Cemetery

other names/site number Historic City Cemetery, Old City Cemetery

## 2. Location

street & number 1000 Broadway ☐ not for publication

city or town Sacramento ☐ vicinity

state California code CA county Sacramento code 067 zip code 95818

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this \_\_\_ nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide \_\_\_ local

Signature of certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government \_\_\_\_\_

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

\_\_\_ entered in the National Register \_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register

\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register \_\_\_ removed from the National Register

\_\_\_ other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

## 5. Classification

Historic City Cemetery  
Name of Property

Sacramento, California  
County and State

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	private
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only **one** box.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	2	buildings
1		district
		site
		structure
		object
	2	<b>Total</b>

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Funerary: cemetery, graves/burials

Agriculture/Subsistence: horticultural facility

Recreation and Culture: outdoor recreation

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Social: civic

Education: research facility

Funerary: cemetery, graves/burials

Recreation and Culture: outdoor recreation

Agriculture/Subsistence: horticultural facility

Landscape: historic landscape and site plan

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Chapel structure: Rusticated Gothic Revival

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Concrete

walls: Brick

Stone: sandstone

roof: Concrete

other: Wrought-iron gate

Stained glass window

**Narrative Description**

See Continuation Sheet

Historic City Cemetery

Name of Property

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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☒ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☒ B removed from its original location.
- ☒ C a birthplace or grave.
- ☒ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Social/Economic/Political History

Community Planning & Development

Landscape Architecture

Exploration/Settlement

Architecture/Artistic value

**Period of Significance**

1849-1962

**Significant Dates**

1849-City Cemetery established. 1850-City officials

begin plotting the site. 1856-Site redevelopment

begins. 1880-Margaret Crocker donation of additional

land. 1893-Mortuary Chapel constructed. 1957-City

Cemetery designated a State Historic Landmark. 1962-

last sale of land that resulted in current boundaries of  
cemetery.

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Multiple; see below.

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Boyd, Joseph C.

Carr, James

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The period significance begins in 1849 when the City of Sacramento passed an ordinance establishing the City Cemetery and appointing a committee to lay out the site to sell family plots to the public. It ends in 1962 when the last portion of land was sold that resulted in the current boundaries of the cemetery.

**Historic City Cemetery**

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**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

Criteria Consideration B, Moved Properties: Some of the graves of historic figures and other individuals are reinterments from other gravesites, including the gravesite of John Sutter Jr., from Mexico City. The group burial of the victims of the 1850 cholera epidemic, Sacramento mayor Hardin Bigelow, and the Grand Army of the Republic cemetery plots were originally located at the New Helvetia Cemetery, a cemetery that was destroyed in 1955-1956 and replaced by a school. However, the overall number of reinterments are a small proportion of the cemetery, all took place more than fifty years ago and have achieved significance in their own right, and include the reinterment of individuals and groups for which the age and historical associations are of overriding rarity and significance.

Criteria Consideration C, Birthplaces or Graves: The individuals nominated for their association with the cemetery under Criteria Consideration C includes only individuals for whom there is no surviving building directly associated with their life and work, with the exception of Margaret Crocker, whose grave is located in the cemetery, but whose eligibility under Criterion B is based on her working life as a patron and advocate of the cemetery.

Criteria Consideration D, Cemeteries: Sacramento's Historic City Cemetery derives its primary significance from its association with this historic transformation of Sacramento from a Gold Rush-era boomtown to a well-established, political and economic hub for the region. It is also an excellent representation of a cultural cemetery landscape developed during its period of significance, with a high degree of integrity. The cemetery also contains the graves of a number of persons of outstanding importance, whose activities determined the course of events in local, state and national history, and has important historic associations from Sacramento and California's early period of settlement, and reflects important aspects of community history. Therefore, it meets the requirements of Criteria Consideration D.

**Statement of Significance**

See Continuation Sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

See Continuation Sheet

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)  
☐ previously listed in the National Register  
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register  
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark  
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

☐ State Historic Preservation Office  
☐ Other State agency  
☐ Federal agency  
☒ Local government  
☐ University  
☐ Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 31.8

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1                                   
Zone Easting Northing

3                                   
Zone Easting Northing

Historic City Cemetery  
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2                                   
Zone Easting Northing

4                                   
Zone Easting Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Sacramento's Historic City Cemetery is bound to the north by Broadway, to the east by Riverside Boulevard, to the west by Muir Way, and to the south by the southern boundaries of various plots, including the Red Men's Plot, Hamilton Square, Veterans Affiliated Council Section, Lower Odd Fellows Section, Grand Army Plot #2 and Riverside South.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries encompass the area which has historically been Sacramento's City Cemetery, as owned and operated by the City of Sacramento, finalized in 1962.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Heather Lavezzo Downey, Interpretive Specialist; Genevieve Entezari, Graduate Student Intern; Debbie Hollingsworth, Interpretive Specialist

organization City of Sacramento -- Center for Sacramento History  
and Community Development Departments

date August 03, 2012

street & number 300 Richards Boulevard, Suite 300

telephone 916-808-8259

city or town Sacramento

state CA

zip code 95811

e-mail rdeering@cityofsacramento.org

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

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**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property:

City or Vicinity:

County:

State:

Historic City Cemetery

Name of Property

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Photographer:

Date Photographed:

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

1 of \_\_\_\_.

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**Property Owner:**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name City of Sacramento c/o Marcia Eymann, Center for Sacramento History

street & number 551 Sequoia Pacific Boulevard

telephone 916-808-7072

city or town Sacramento

state CA

zip code 95811-0229

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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Sacramento City Cemetery

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**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION<sup>1</sup>**

Established in 1849, the Sacramento's Historic City Cemetery is a 31.8-acre district in Sacramento, California, located to the south of the city's historic core, with its entrance from Broadway at 10<sup>th</sup> Street. With the onset of the Gold Rush in 1849, Sacramento became a rapidly-growing settlement at the low-lying confluence of two mighty, flood-prone rivers - the Sacramento and American. In 1849, City officials chose a section of high ground on Y Street (modern-day Broadway), just south of the newly-platted city, for the Sacramento City Cemetery. Since then, the site's topography has tempered and determined the Cemetery's growth and design. Today, the City Cemetery is characterized by this topography, as well as the site's layout and organization of drives and pathways, terrace retaining walls, arrangement of plots, plot walls, vegetation, the Mortuary Chapel, and an array of monuments and mausoleums. As an historic cultural landscape and an outdoor museum, this historic site is a three-dimensional record of Sacramento and California history dating back to the Gold Rush. Although all its lots have been sold, the City Cemetery still sees between 15 and 30 burials each year. In total, it has had over 25,000 burials (possibly as many as 40,000). As a cultural landscape, the site has evolved over time through use by Sacramentans. Decisions to use and change the landscape as a burial ground and community gathering place have shaped the site since the Gold Rush. Sacramento's City Cemetery continues to reflect these historic functions as much of its nineteenth-century appearance, site design, features and land-use remains intact. As such, the site exemplifies one component of early residents' efforts to give some structure to an unruly site and develop permanent institutions in a city which owed its origins to serving a transient population.

The Historic City Cemetery is bound to the north by Broadway, to the east by Riverside Boulevard, to the west by Muir Way, and by the southern boundaries of various cemetery plots, including the Red Men's Plot, Hamilton Square, the Veterans Affiliated Sections, Lower Odd Fellows Sections, Grand Army Plot #2, and Riverside South. These boundaries represent that area which has historically been the City Cemetery, as owned and operated by the City of Sacramento. The Masonic Cemetery is located to the south of the City Cemetery. Although included within the parameter of a metal fence (installed in 2005) that encompasses the City Cemetery, the Masonic Cemetery is not included as part of the historic property.

Since 1849, the City Cemetery has sat atop a sandy knoll to the south of Sacramento's city core. At its center, the City Cemetery site is roughly 12 feet higher than its edges along Muir Way and Riverside Boulevard. Furthermore, the City Cemetery's western quarter is steep, while the southeast portion is flat. Due to the topographical variations, cemetery plots are raised in terraces, and densely arranged across the entire site with the exception of walking paths, drives and the four buildings located within the City Cemetery boundaries. In contrast with many contemporary cemeteries built elsewhere in the United States, Sacramento's City Cemetery employs a "rational," rather than "rural," design. Instead of a picturesque or naturalistic landscape with winding, curvilinear pathways, Sacramento's City Cemetery boasts straight, narrow plot lines divided by straight, angular pedestrian pathways. The site's varied topography required that the City Cemetery's design and land-use be adaptive. Hillsides are terraced with brick and stone retaining walls to create level burial plots. As such, cemetery plots are raised and bounded by low retaining walls or curbs of brick, stone or concrete. Where the terrain is not flat, larger walls of stone or brick are used to create level sections for the rectangular plots. Some plots have rounded corners and curbs. The City Cemetery's circulation system is composed of asphalt-paved

<sup>1</sup> Royston, Hanamoto, Alley & Abey, *Sacramento Historic City Cemetery Master Plan* (City of Sacramento, 2007).

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drives that are roughly 12-14 feet wide, as well as pedestrian pathways that are paved with a variety of materials including turf, wood chips, brick, or concrete, in various designs, many contained within narrow curbing. Reflective of the City Cemetery's "rational" design, the drives are straight and travel over the terrain, regardless of the topography.

The City Cemetery's diverse vegetation and plant life helps to create its park-like atmosphere. Elms provide a canopy for much of the site, along with pines, oaks, magnolias, cypress, and other trees. Shrubbery and small plants are typically planted by plot owners. Turf is the most prevalent ground cover. The site's three major gardens contain historic Gold-Rush era roses (located in the Historic Rose Gardens, Bruner Area, and Cadwalder Area), perennial plants (located in the Hamilton Square area), and native, more recently introduced, plants (near Veterans Sections E & F). The area now known as the Historic Rose Garden, in particular, boasts over 400 plants, representing over 200 varieties. The City Cemetery is furnished with twentieth-century benches, trash receptacles, drinking fountains as well as identification and directional signage. The most evident site utilities are those related to the irrigation system and electricity poles and overhead wires are also present.

The City Cemetery possesses an array of grave markers that range in form from modest wooden slabs and simple stone markers, to elaborate monuments with stone statues and carvings, to mausoleums. These monuments memorialize city pioneers, entrepreneurs, politicians, and numerous others from the Gold Rush era through modern times. Some of these monuments include city founder John A. Sutter, Jr., pioneer politicians Albert M. Winn and Hardin Bigelow (city's first mayor), California governors John Bigler and Newton Booth, Turn-Verein charter member, August R. Klein, and cemetery benefactor, Margaret Crocker. The collection is a remarkable survey of stone carving, architectural styles, and funerary symbols and icons.

### **Buildings Within the City Cemetery**

The City Cemetery site includes four buildings, two of which are contributing resources and two of which are non-contributing. The contributing buildings are:

**1. The Mortuary Chapel:** Constructed in 1893. Built in rusticated Gothic Revival architectural style and designed by James Carr, the Mortuary Chapel sits atop an elevated plot that is bordered with a small, concrete wall. It is a one unit, one-story building with a square footprint and concrete foundation. The structure's walls are brick, while its front wall is faced with sandstone. It has a gable-pitched, concrete roof with a slight, flared eave overhang. Both of the structure's side walls are adorned with three pilasters. The Mortuary Chapel's most prominent feature is a pointed, stone arch on its front wall which serves as the entrance to the structure. The arch's keystone is engraved with "1893." A wrought-iron gate covers the wooden, double doors set within the arch. Above the door, and still within the arch, a stained glass window sits in a round, unbroken pediment. The words "Mortuary Chapel" are engraved in stone above the arch. The Chapel now houses the cemetery archives and records.

**2. Office and entry gate:** Located at the 10<sup>th</sup> Street gate on Broadway, the office and entry gate serves as the maintenance staff's office and was constructed after the 1949 removal of the historic entry gate, bell tower and lodging. It is a square brick structure with a pyramidal metal roof and metal casement windows. The building does not have a particular architectural style, but it is a contributor due to its role as the new entry gate of the property since its construction circa 1949 through the end of



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the period of significance in 1962. In 1955 the building was affixed with a marker identifying the City Cemetery as a city of Sacramento historic site.

**3. Maintenance Building:** maintenance building is a simple brick building with a flat roof and two shed additions on the building's eastern wall. The building appears to have received multiple modifications and additions that have affected the historic integrity of the property, and it is unclear when the building was built. The maintenance building is a non-contributor to the district.

**4. Storage Building:** The storage facility, located at the cemetery's southeastern end, is a metal building with a wooden building constructed around it. The building shows evidence of recent modification and does not represent a particular identifiable style. As such it is not a contributor to the district.

**Major Plots and Sections Within the City Cemetery**

**5. The Sacramento Pioneers Association:** The Sacramento Pioneers Association was a fraternal organization restricted to those men who came to Sacramento during the early stages of the Gold Rush. Membership was restricted to the men who arrived in Sacramento no later than December 31, 1849. Some of the Association's original members included prominent and influential early Sacramentans such as James W. Marshall, James McClatchy, Mark Hopkins, C. P. Huntington, and former California governors Newton Booth and John Bigler. The members buried in this plot represent an identifiable group significant to the history of Sacramento and California. Mark Hopkins and Albert M. Winn's graves are located in this section, identified as individually eligible under Criterion B (see Section 8)

The Sacramento Pioneer Association's objective was to collect and preserve the artifacts, documents and sites associated with the beginnings of the city of Sacramento and state of California. They saved over one thousand artifacts and archival records which are today housed at the Center for Sacramento History in the Pioneers' collection. The Pioneers were also instrumental in saving Sutter's Fort from ruin and spearheaded its reconstruction. They have participated in a wide variety of events, celebrations, and excursions in Sacramento and throughout California.

The Sacramento organization was the second pioneer association founded in California. The first Society of California Pioneers was organized in San Francisco in August 1850. In 1891 the Sons and Daughters of the Pioneers became an auxiliary organization to the original, and in 1908 they included two classes of members: pioneers and descendants. The Sacramento Pioneer Association plot is a contributing site.

**6. Historic Volunteer Firemen's Plot and Bell:** On June 23, 1858, a grateful city donated this plot of ground to its volunteer fire department for the interment of its deceased members. The plot honors the volunteer firemen who helped save the city from fire. Fire was an ever-present danger in Sacramento's early stages of development. In the initial frenzy of the Gold Rush, structures were hastily constructed of highly flammable materials like wood and canvas. With open flame as the source of heat and light for these buildings, the possibility of catastrophe remained high.

The Sacramento City Council understood the extreme risk of fire and supported the formation of fire

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companies for the city as early as 1850. Sacramento was the first in the state to organize a volunteer fire fighting unit. The Mutual Hook and Ladder Company No. 1 was formed on February 5, 1850. A serious fire in March 1851 renewed the public demand for more fire protection, and by the end of the month, Sacramento's first three fire companies were in place. The city provided basic equipment and an engine house. The volunteer system remained in place until 1872 when the city established a paid fire department. Each of the original three engine companies had its own bell. Bells alerted volunteers of the break-out of fires; they were also used to ring in celebrations of big events. The bells of Engine Companies Numbers 1 and 2 remain in existence today. Engine Company No. 1's bell rests behind Fire Station 8 on "H" Street in Sacramento. Engine Company No. 2's bell marks the Firemen's Plot in the Old City Cemetery. Installed in 1857, it is the largest of the three bells. The whereabouts of the bell from Engine Company No. 3 is unknown. Engine Company No. 2's bell and its gazebo structure are a contributing structure within the City Cemetery, and the Volunteer Firemen's Plot is a contributing site.

In 1878, the city designated the Grand Army of the Republic plot as the first of three major sites within the Cemetery intended as burial sites for Sacramento's war veterans. Because they are physically separate and were created at separate times, with different design methodologies and layout, they are three separate sites, each of which is a contributing site to the overall district.

**7. The Grand Army of the Republic (GAR)** was a fraternal organization composed of veterans of the Union Army who served in the American Civil War. Thompson and West describe it as an organization of honorably discharged members of the Army and Navy. Its goals were to "perpetuate a friendly feeling among its members, aid and assist those in distress, and to provide for the widows and orphans of their deceased comrades."<sup>2</sup> A statue of a soldier guards the GAR plot, dedicated in 1889. The GAR soldier is the only male represented by statuary in the City Cemetery, and it is the only painted statue. This plot was originally located in the New Helvetia Cemetery at 31<sup>st</sup> and J Street but was relocated to the Old City Cemetery when the New Helvetia Cemetery was destroyed.

**8. Grand Army Plot #2** is physically separate from the GAR plot, located south of the Grand army plot, in a section also known as the Singleton Fill. Located alongside Grand Army Plot #2 are a Spanish American Veterans' memorial located on the northern end of GAR Plot #2, and an Old Soldiers' Plot located at the south end. The Old Soldiers' Plot is also dedicated to veterans of the Spanish American War, and features a memorial flagpole, dedicated to the sailors lost in the sinking of the *USS Maine*, containing a mechanism salvaged from the wreckage of the *USS Maine*, including a memorial plaque cast from metal salvaged from the *Maine*.

**9. Veterans Affiliated Council Section** is a large site located centrally on the southern end of the cemetery, marked by a flagpole, a pillar known as the Albert Driggs Veterans' Memorial, dedicated August 24, 1947 by the Veterans Affiliated Council, and small, ground-level gravesite markers in a uniform pattern. This section is occupied by veterans of American wars from World War I forward, including the First and Second World War and the Korean War. The Veterans Affiliated Council section also contains the unmarked gravesites of the victims of the 1850 cholera epidemic, relocated from the former New Helvetia Cemetery.

<sup>2</sup> Thompson and West, *History of Sacramento County*. Oakland, California, 1880, 174-175.

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**Fraternal Organizations Sections:**

The Cemetery includes a number of fraternal sections. This started in 1859 with the Masons, in what is known as the "Old Masonic Cemetery." The trend continued with the Odd Fellows in 1861 and the Sacramento Pioneers Association in 1862.

Starting in 1875, part of the City Cemetery acreage was sold to the Masons and Odd Fellows, who created their own cemeteries on the land.

**10. The Independent Order of Odd Fellows** (I.O.O.F.) formed in Sacramento on August 20, 1849 under the leadership of City Councilman, A.M. Winn to relieve the distressed and bury the dead. The Odd Fellows section of the cemetery is divided into three portions, the Upper, Middle and Lower Odd Fellows Sections, divided by paved walking paths, but the three portions share a common historic context and are physically contiguous, so they are identified as a single site..

At least half of the gold rush miners who came to California in 1849 traveled the overland route across the continent. They followed the California Trail and arrived in Sacramento during the autumn months of August, September, and October. The arduous journey depleted the travelers of their strength, health, and finances. The new City Council seemed unwilling or unable to cope with the mounting crisis. So many people arrived in a weakened, sick or dying condition that the newspapers cried out for humanitarian care. Obviously frustrated with the city government's lack of response, the *Placer Times*' editors implored, "Where is the City Council?"<sup>3</sup>

There were many Odd Fellows in Sacramento at the time, but there was not an officially sanctioned lodge in the city. On September 29, 1849 the *Placer Times* noted that the Odd Fellows organized as an Association for the "special purpose of relieving the sick or distressed of the Order." Dr. John F. Morse wrote in his "History of Sacramento" that the "first and most effective relief" came from the Fraternity of Odd Fellows. "Like a band of pure Samaritans," he continued, they "devoted themselves with untiring zeal to the wants and necessities of suffering humanity."<sup>4</sup> He reported that the Odd Fellows spent thousands of dollars on coffins alone in order to provide the unfortunate with the dignity of proper burials. The men buried here lack individual distinction.

**11. The Free & Accepted Masons** were another group well-represented in Sacramento during this early period. A December 1849 issue of the *Placer Times* reported that the Masons joined the Odd Fellows in their "work of benevolence." The Odd Fellows purchased the southeast corner of Sutter's Fort for the purpose of operating a hospital. Along with the Masons, they formed a joint Board and retained "exclusive control over the affairs of the hospital."<sup>5</sup> The hospital tended not only to the sick and dying as they arrived in Sacramento after their long journey, but also throughout the cholera epidemic that killed more than thousands in October 1850. The Masons and Odd Fellow provided care and comfort to new residents when Sacramento lacked the proper infrastructure to support the influx of gold seekers at the start of the Gold Rush. The grave of John Bigler is located within the Old Masonic Plot.

<sup>3</sup> "A.M. Winn: Father of City Government in Sacramento." *Golden Notes* 35, no. 3 (Fall, 1989), 4.

<sup>4</sup> John F. Morse, "History of Sacramento." In Samuel Colville's *Sacramento Directory For the Year 1853-1854*. California State Library Foundation, 1997, 46.

<sup>5</sup> "A.M. Winn: Father of City Government in Sacramento." *Golden Notes* 35, no. 3 (Fall, 1989), 7.

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**12. Crocker Family Plot/Crocker Section:** The largest grave marker on the Crocker family plot is that of Edwin Bryant Crocker, California Supreme Court justice and lead attorney for the Central Pacific Railroad, but this family plot is also the gravesite of Margaret Crocker, who is eligible under Criterion B for her association with the cemetery during her life. E.B. Crocker's gravesite is not eligible as he was not primarily associated with the cemetery, and there are other surviving buildings in California associated with his productive life, including the Crocker Home and Art Museum in Sacramento. The Crocker family plot is part of the Crocker Section/Upper 9<sup>th</sup> Section, a contributing site based on the architecture and design of the cemetery, including some of the cemetery's most dramatic gravesites, including the Menke Plot statue at the northwestern corner of the cemetery facing west.

**13. Lower 9<sup>th</sup>, Elliotts and Putnam Tiers Section:** This westernmost section of the cemetery is heavily terraced using brick, stone and concrete terrace walls to provide horizontal burial sites along the steep edge of the high ground, originally known as Sand Hill, defining the City Cemetery's western boundary, chosen for its location on high ground above flood levels. The eastern slope of Sand Hill was more gradual, so terracing on the western end is less dramatic, but these three sections are related by geography and common terraced cemetery design in response to the steep hillside. At the base of the terraced hill are a row of mature trees and a wrought iron fence. The creation of the New Helvetia housing project in 1940-1942 delineates the modern western edge of the City Cemetery.

**14. Center Run, Newton Booth and State Plot:** The "Center Run" is a large oval-shaped plot located near the entrance to the City Cemetery closest to 10<sup>th</sup> Street. The gravesite of Newton Booth (indicated as a significant individual under Criterion B) is located directly within the entrance to the plot. Behind the Newton Booth plot are the gravesites of General George Wright and Maulavi Muhammad Barakat Ullah. On the eastern side of the Center Run is the State Plot.

**18. State Plot:** This rectangular plot, located near the highest portion of the cemetery, was reserved for individuals who served in state government offices during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The State Plot includes the graves of California state elected officials, including Governor William Irwin, California Secretary of State William H. Weeks, Colorado Supreme Court Justice Hugh C. Murray, State Treasurer Levi Rackliffe, Secretary of State Edwin G. Waite, State Controller Edward P. Colgan, and California Supreme Court Justice Royal T. Sprague, in addition to State Senators and State Assemblymen. The State Plot is accessed via concrete steps with a concrete balustrade, surrounded by a short masonry wall topped with concrete, and features two mature palm trees flanking the William Irwin gravestone, the largest marker within the State Plot.

**Individual Grave Sites Within the City Cemetery**

The following locations are the gravesites of individuals identified as significant under Criterion B or architecturally significant locations of the cemetery under Criterion B, separate from the individually identified contributing sites listed above. The resource number is indicated on the accompanying map.

**15. Newton Booth Gravesite**

**16. Maulavi Muhammad Barakat Ullah Gravesite** is marked by a black granite gravestone. Maulavi

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Barakat Ullah, also known as Abdul Hafiz Mohamed Barakatullah or Maulavi Barkatullah, was born circa 1854, was an anti-British Indian revolutionary, born in Bhopal, India. Traveling to Bombay and London for his education, he mastered seven languages and became the Quondam Professor of the Urdu language at Tokyo University, Japan. He became associated with the Muslim Patriotic League and was a public advocate for Indian independence from England and the economic development of south Asia. His pursuit of Indian independence made Barakatullah a political refugee, unwelcome in his home country for the last 35 years of his life. His travels took him throughout Asia, Europe and the United States, with his first trip to New York in 1899, then visiting California for the first time in 1914, visiting Indian immigrant communities on the west coast. He died on September 20, 1927, and his body was taken from San Francisco to a Moslem cemetery in Marysville, California, later transferred to the Sacramento city cemetery with the intent of eventually relocating his body to Bhopal, India.<sup>6</sup>

**17. Gravesite of General George Wright:** A graduate of West Point in 1822, George Wright was a veteran of the Seminole War in Florida and the Mexican War, and also participated in Indian campaigns in the Pacific Northwest. General Wright served as Military Commander of the Pacific Coast during the American Civil War.

### Cultural Landscape Evaluation

(Note: This section is reproduced from *Sacramento Historic City Cemetery Master Plan*, December 2007, prepared for the City of Sacramento Convention, Culture and Leisure Department, prepared by Royston Hanamoto Alley & Abbey Landscape Architects and Planners.)

### Topography

Most of Sacramento lies within a floodplain and is generally flat. Located on a small sand hill, the cemetery site provided a well-drained, flood-free site. (See Figure 2.1) The existing topography at the site ranges from an approximate elevation of 15 - 42. The northern half of the cemetery is on a small knoll (Center Run section) on axis with 10<sup>th</sup> Street. The knoll is approximately 12 feet above the entrance at 10<sup>th</sup> Ave., but it is about 24 feet above the edges of the cemetery along Muir Way and Riverside Boulevard. Two smaller knolls exist in the west side of the cemetery in the Van Voorhies and Pioneers' sections. The terrain on the western quarter of the cemetery is steep and the land has been terraced by a series of walls. The southeast section of the cemetery is flat. The drives are generally arranged without regard to the terrain, so the topography can be seen where the drives rise and fall.

### Land Uses

Cemetery plots are densely arranged across the entire site with the exception of the drives and the area of the Chapel and maintenance building.

### Circulation System

The circulation system consists of asphalt-paved drives (carriage ways) that are approximately 12 to 14 feet wide, and pedestrian paths that include a wide variety of surfaces including turf, wood chips, brick stone, and concrete. The spatial organization of the cemetery generally consists of a series of

<sup>6</sup> South Asian American Digital Archive, accessed July 8, 2014.  
<http://www.saadigitalarchive.org/item/20111212-544>

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rectilinear sections that are bounded by the paved drives. While most of the sections are rectangles, some have rounded ends. The drives are generally straight and travel over the terrain without regard to the topography. Tightly grouped smaller rectangles of individual plots exist within the sections. The straight linear drives and paths create vistas along their axis.

### **Views**

When first established, the cemetery had expansive views across Sacramento, due to its topographical position. As trees within the cemetery and throughout the city matured, the views disappeared. Currently, a visitor to the cemetery can see the taller buildings of downtown Sacramento. Within the cemetery, the linear drives and paths create internal vistas along their straight lines.

### **Vegetation**

Common with most other cemeteries of this era, vegetation played an important role in creating a park-like setting to comfort the grieving and make a pleasant environment for remembrance. Canopy trees, primarily elms, provided a large deciduous canopy over much of the last century. Other common trees include pines, oaks, magnolias, cypress, and other species. An eclectic variety of small trees and shrubs were also present. Much of the planting was apparently done by plot owners, so there is no distinct plan or order. Turf was typically used as the most common ground cover. Special planting within plots often included other ground covers and flower plants. In the years between the 1940s and 1980s, much of the cemetery was untended and un-irrigated, with weeds and grasses greening with winter rains, but turning brown the rest of the year.

Starting in the 1980s, the Old City Cemetery Committee has worked to transform the cemetery planting, maintaining, and generally greening the cemetery. This work has transformed parts of the cemetery into gardens, including a significant collection of rare and historic roses. Irrigation has been installed and maintenance has improved greatly through the OCCC volunteers, city staff, and the Sheriff's work program. Canopy trees, particularly the elms, are being lost due to age and disease. There is currently no program to replace them. The current state of the gardens includes a variety of garden styles and plant types. This is likely not that different than the conditions in the cemetery when it was tended primarily by plot owners.

### **Landscape Dividers**

The cemetery is organized into plots, most of them raised. The plots are defined by low walls of brick, stone, or concrete. Where the terrain is not flat, larger walls are used to create level sections for plots. Most of the larger walls are of stone or brick. Some of the plots also include metal fences, generally cast or wrought iron. A new fence around the perimeter of the cemetery was installed in 2005. It is likely that there were previous versions of a perimeter fence. (Note that the fence extends around the perimeter to include the Masonic Cemetery. There is no internal fence or other divider at the boundary between the City Cemetery and the Masonic Cemetery.)

### **Site Furnishings**

Site furnishings at the cemetery include benches, trash receptacles, drinking fountains and signs. The benches include a wide variety of styles most of which are appropriate to the cemetery's historic setting, but some of which are not appropriate. In general, traditional bench designs are considered more appropriate than contemporary designs.

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The trash receptacles include several that are a basic woven wire mesh, and others are steel drums. A drinking fountain consists of a contemporary steel model designed to be accessible to persons in wheelchairs. There are a wide variety of signs for different purposes throughout the cemetery. There is a system of blue signs on a wood base that provide street names, but it is not particularly consistent with the historic setting. There are a variety of signs for other purposes including interpretive, historical, and horticultural. These generally do not conform to a particular standard.

### Site Utilities and Lighting

Various features of the water supply and irrigation system are the most evident site utility. A back flow and booster pump sits near the front of the cemetery and various irrigation heads are placed on fixed risers throughout the cemetery. Electricity to the buildings is provided by overhead wires supported by wood poles. A few cobra-head light fixtures are located on the poles. There is a lack of adequate storm drainage facilities in the cemetery, and ponding and flooding sometimes occur.

### Buildings

Cemetery buildings include the office at the 10th Street gate, the chapel, the maintenance building, and a storage structure at the east end. The mortuary chapel dates from 1893 and was previously used to store corpses prior to burial. The chapel now houses the cemetery archives and records. The office at the front entry gate serves as the office for the cemetery maintenance staff. The building was constructed sometime after the signature entry gate and chapel were removed in 1949 to make way for the widening of Broadway. The office is a simple brick structure with metal roof that does not have architectural style or articulation.

The maintenance building is also a simple brick structure that contains storage and an office for the sheriff. Storage is provided by a metal storage container with a wood structure built around it. With the exception of the mortuary chapel, the existing buildings do not have any architectural qualities that contribute to the historic character of the cemetery. [Note: The 10<sup>th</sup> Street office is significant for its historic association with the later period of the cemetery's development, 1949-1962, not for its architecture.]

### Monuments

The monuments are the most important cemetery feature. There are a wide variety of styles representative of a large portion of the cemetery's history. The monuments range from a modest wood slab (at least one), to simple stone markers, to elaborate monuments with stone statues and carvings, to stone mausoleums. The collection is a remarkable survey of stone carving, architectural styles, and funerary symbols and icons.

City Cemetery has evolved over its entire history, and it will likely continue to evolve. With several layers of history both visible and buried, the cemetery should be considered a traditional, cultural landscape. The period of significance is the period of time in which the property achieved the qualities that make it eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. For this study, the period of significance is determined to be 1849 to 1962. The beginning date represents the earliest development of the cemetery [until the final sale of property from the original cemetery grounds in 1962.] Established in 1849, Old City Cemetery is among the earliest designed cemeteries in the United States and is likely the oldest in the West. Although it is somewhat different in design, it is a western adaptation of the American rural cemetery movement that began with Mt. Auburn Cemetery in 1831.

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The cemetery was laid out with Sacramento's original street grid, so it coincides with Sacramento's establishment as a city. (See the beginning of this chapter for additional information on the historic context of City Cemetery in relation to other early cemeteries.)

**Character Defining Features**

The character defining features are those features of the cemetery, dating from the period of significance, that contribute to the historic status of the cemetery. These features include:

- the collection of monuments and mausoleums
- the layout and organization of drives and pathways
- terrace retaining walls
- plot walls and metalwork fences
- historic vegetation (see 1953 aerial photo)
- the Mortuary Chapel
- existing topography

**Historic Integrity**

The integrity of the cemetery is generally high. A number of the monuments are damaged or missing parts, but overall the collection is intact. The largest issue is the loss of the historic entry gate and chapel that was removed in 1949 to make way for the widening of Broadway. Several feet of the cemetery were removed and a retaining wall built along the Broadway frontage to accommodate the widened street. Some of the historic elm trees have been lost to age and disease.

Sacramento's Historic City Cemetery maintains its historic integrity of location (1), design (2), setting (3), materials (4), workmanship (5), feeling (6) and association (7). The site remains intact since 1849, with no change to its general boundaries which were finalized in 1962 (1). The Cemetery's historic site design remains intact and recognizable as a mid-nineteenth century "rationally" designed cemetery (2) with the layout of roads, paths and 19<sup>th</sup> century curbing and fencing around the rectangular plots, the terracing of the topography, all remain with a few missing or damaged individual elements. The site maintains its' setting (3) in that it still sits atop a sandy knoll, above the threat of high water. While a number of iron fence elements and monuments are damaged or are missing parts, and the historic entry gate was removed in 1949, the Cemetery, as a cohesive site and cultural landscape, maintains integrity of workmanship (5). Furthermore, the removal of several feet of the cemetery and the addition of a retaining wall along the Broadway frontage to accommodate the widening of the street do not diminish the site's integrity of workmanship. The feeling (6) of the Cemetery as an historic burial ground and community gathering place remains, as does its association (7) with Sacramento's diverse Gold-Rush era population, its mid-nineteenth century city planning policies, and the rapid urban development that followed.



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**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY PARAGRAPH**

Sacramento's Historic City Cemetery is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criteria A, B and C at the national level of significance, with a period of significance from 1849 until 1962. Under Criterion A, the property played a significant role in the social history and community planning for the city of Sacramento during the pioneer era of the state of California. As the main inland transportation nexus for the California Gold Rush, and after 1854 the capital of California, Sacramento's city cemetery played an important role in events that shaped the history of California, during a period when events taking place in California had national effects, including the Gold Rush and the construction of the Pacific Railroad. Under Criterion B, the property is associated directly with the life of Margaret Crocker, and is the gravesite of John Sutter Jr., Albert M. Winn, Hardin Bigelow, John Bigler, Newton Booth, and Mark Hopkins, individuals significant to the history of the city of Sacramento, the state of California, and the United States, for whom the cemetery is the sole surviving property associated with these individuals. Under Criterion C, the property embodies the distinctive characteristic of 19<sup>th</sup> century urban cemetery design, organized into a rational series of plots and designed landscapes, containing outstanding examples of funerary art in the form of mausoleums and monuments within a framework of terraced landscape architecture. The property was originally laid out by city surveyor Joseph Boyd, with horticulture and arboriculture developed through the efforts of cemetery patron Margaret Crocker. The central mausoleum was designed by James Carr. The property meets the requirements of Criteria Consideration B, Moved Properties, because the reinterments have achieved significance in their own right, Criteria Consideration C in the case of identified significant individuals for which there is no surviving property associated with their working lives, and Criteria Consideration D as its significance derives from its historic associations, artistic value, and its status as a cemetery containing the graves of a number of persons of transcendent importance to American history.

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: CRITERION A<sup>1</sup>**

Sacramento's Historic City Cemetery is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A at the State level of significance in the areas of Social History and Community Planning & Development for its association with the onset of the Gold Rush in 1848 and the subsequent, rapid settlement of Sacramento as a permanent commercial, transportation, and political hub. The property meets the requirements of Criteria Consideration D because the cemetery draws its significance from its ability to convey these patterns in Sacramento, California and American history. Beginning in 1849, the City Cemetery met an important municipal need for the young city and its diverse population. Decision-making surrounding the cemetery's location and site design reflected early Sacramento residents' continual struggle with nature. On May 5, 1957 The Sacramento City Cemetery was designated as a California Historical Landmark, NO. 566, by the State Historical Landmarks

<sup>1</sup> Royston, et al. *Sacramento Historic City Cemetery Master Plan*; William Holden, *Sacramento: Excursions into its History and Natural World* (Sacramento: Two Rivers Publishing, 1987), 171; *Union*, June 12, 1851. Center for Sacramento History: Eleanor McClatchy Collection (Caroline Wenzel Notebooks, Volume 6), 96-102; H.S. Crocker & Co., *Directory for Sacramento City and County* (San Francisco: F.M. Husted, 1893) Center for Sacramento History, Folsom History Museum Collection; City of Sacramento City Council Collection – Minute Records, 1893 "Reports – Specifications" Box 9 folder 11. 1974/04, Center for Sacramento History; Specifications for Receiving Vault and Chapel to be erected in the City Cemetery, Sacramento California. Adopted July 10, 1893; *Sacramento Bee*, "Report to Sacramento City Historic Landmarks Commission," April 4, 1955. Center for Sacramento History: Eleanor McClatchy Collection (Caroline Wenzel Notebooks, Volume 6), 96-102; *Union*, "State Burial Plot in Sacramento City Cemetery." May 14, 1860.

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Commission, under the sponsorship of the Native Sons of the Golden West and the Native Daughters of the Golden West eight years before the passage of the National Preservation Act in 1965. In 2011 it became a landmark for the City of Sacramento. It is one of the oldest, largest and most intact Gold Rush era burial sites in California. Furthermore, it has always been municipally-owned, helping to illuminate the role of government in Western settlement and development in the mid-nineteenth century.

With the onset of the California Gold Rush in 1849, the site of Sacramento transformed rapidly from a seasonally-occupied floodplain at the confluence of the Sacramento and American Rivers, to a hub of Gold-Rush transportation and commerce. While thousands of miners passed through Sacramento on their way to the Sierra Nevada gold fields, many individuals, and eventually families, chose to settle and purchase land in the new city. Almost immediately after incorporation in 1850, the rivers overflowed their banks, flooding Sacramento. Furthermore, the city experienced a devastating cholera epidemic and a violent, deadly riot over land-rights during its first year. As Sacramento historian William Holden asserts, "To live in Sacramento in the 1850s, you had to be a glutton for punishment." Indeed, such natural and man-made disasters plagued Sacramento throughout the 1850s. Despite this perilous beginning, Sacramentans worked quickly to stabilize their city during the Gold Rush. Led by Sacramento's first mayor, Hardin Bigelow (who is buried at the City Cemetery,) City leaders and tax-paying residents constructed a levee system and passed ordinances to improve street conditions. Furthermore, city officials passed an ordinance requiring property owners to construct buildings with "disaster-proof" materials such as brick and granite. In 1854, the state legislature named Sacramento the permanent state capital of California. Due in part to these decisions and achievements, Sacramento matured rapidly as a commercial and political hub throughout the 1850s.

Founded in 1849 at the onset of this rapid urban development, the City Cemetery met an important municipal need for Sacramento and its burgeoning population. Early city-builders recognized that a cemetery was a necessary amenity in a community burdened with sudden overpopulation, poor sanitary conditions, and illnesses. In late 1849, a committee of the Sacramento Common Council selected a tract of land on high ground just south of the city's newly-platted grid. The site's elevated topography made it an ideal choice for a cemetery in the flood-prone city, so the committee approached the landowners, John Augustus Sutter Sr. and Henry A. Schoolcraft. The men donated 10 acres for the cause. Sutter reportedly remarked that if "the officials would fill [the cemetery] with men who were aligned against him, he would gladly provide more ground."

On December 3, 1849, the Sacramento City Council passed an ordinance accepting the gift and establishing a "public graveyard." The *Sacramento Union* newspaper described the site in 1852,

The cemetery is on the highest ground in the vicinity of the city, and commands an unobstructed view of the Sacramento, the Coast Range, the Sierra Nevada, and the city itself. The hill is composed of sand and every portion of it is far above high-water, which circumstances render it a peculiarly favorable location for a cemetery . . .

When cholera struck Sacramento in late 1850, thousands died and citizens disposed of the bodies in a large, mass grave at Sutter's Fort, one of the first nineteenth-century burial sites established by new arrivals. Due to flooding concerns, however, bodies buried at this cemetery were later moved to the City Cemetery. It is estimated that the City Cemetery is the final resting place for over 500 cholera victims, although their graves remain individually unmarked. Between 1850 and 1855, the city did little to

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develop or maintain the Cemetery even though an estimated 3,000 burials took place there during that time. According to the *Sacramento Union* newspaper in June 1851, "At the present time our cemetery does not exhibit those indications of public care and lingering remembrance of surviving friends that ought to be manifested in such a community as ours." This article explains that a Sacramento resident named Alderman J. McKenzie, at his own expense, had been taking care of the grounds, and was appealing to the City Trustees to dedicate more money to the site's care. While city leaders did not take official action to care for the Cemetery until 1856, evidence exists that the conditions of the cemetery improved at the hands of private citizens, following McKenzie's example. Indeed, in 1852, the *Sacramento Union* reported, ". . . The friends and relatives of many of the deceased buried in these grounds have exhibited their love and remembrance for the departed, by adorning and beautifying their graves by the planting of shrubbery, and the erection of neat and substantial palings." In 1856, the city's elected officials passed an ordinance to improve the condition of the City Cemetery. They appointed a Cemetery Superintendent to care for the grounds. At this time, the city also adopted a formal land-use and design plan for the Cemetery. This "redevelopment" of the City Cemetery had various components that took place over many years. In contrast with other cemeteries developed around the country at this time, Sacramento's City Cemetery employed a "rational," rather than "rural," design. Instead of a picturesque or naturalistic landscape with winding, curvilinear pathways, the Cemetery had straight, narrow plot lines divided by straight carriage ways. The redevelopment also included raised plots bound by stone or brick walls, some featuring decorative iron fencing, as well as terraces, to compensate for the topography of the landscape. In 1857, the city built an entry gate at the 10<sup>th</sup> Street entrance off "Y" Street (today, Broadway), complete with a bell tower and lodge (Image 6). In July 1893 the city contracted with James Carr to construct the Chapel Mortuary on the site, the last of the city's major 19<sup>th</sup>-century improvements to the Cemetery. The total cost was \$2,269.00 and the specifications were developed by civil engineer and Sacramento City Surveyor, Joseph C. Boyd. Historically, this structure was the repository for bodies prior to burial. Sacramento philanthropist and amateur horticulturalist, Margaret Crocker, showed her support for the City Cemetery by constructing the Bell Conservatory (Image 6) on what is today Broadway, overlooking the Cemetery. From here, Mrs. Crocker sold flowers to Cemetery patrons, helping to establish the site's horticultural legacy.

All of these improvements associated with the Cemetery's "redevelopment" increased visitation and public support, and the tradition of families adding vegetation to their plots, as evidenced by this 1872 *Sacramento Union* article:

The City Cemetery has been for years and remains the popular, if the expression may be used, place for burial for the Sacramentans. A deposit of sand by nature, it has required a great outlay of money and labor so that there might thrive the flower and vines planted by the hands of the affection and grateful remembrance. To the City Cemetery may be well applied to quotation that "the desert has been made to blossom as the rose."

During this period, the city began selling groups of burial plots to families and fraternal organizations such as the Masons, Odd Fellows, Pioneers Association, Improved Order of Redmen, United Ancient Order of Druids and the Sacramento Turn Verein. Local labor organizations also purchased plots, including the Printers' and Painters' Unions. The city donated cemetery land to honor volunteer firemen and Civil War Veterans of the Grand Army of the Republic.

The city's continued management of the Cemetery often involved selling or acquiring land, causing its

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size to fluctuate. In 1866, the City purchased 10 acres from a nearby property owner to add to the Cemetery site, bringing its acreage up to 30. Beginning in 1875, the city began selling tracts of cemetery land – not plots – to local fraternal organizations, reducing its total acreage by 6. In 1880, Margaret Crocker donated land to the city for the Cemetery, increasing its size to nearly 60 acres.

Between the mid-1850s and the turn of the century, the City Cemetery was not only the community's primary burial spot, but also a place to enjoy its pleasant park-like surroundings and partake in outdoor recreation and horticultural activities. As the *Sacramento Bee* reported in February 1860

At this season of the year, before the rough ocean winds of the summer months have commenced to blow, there is a quiet beauty about our metropolitan Cemetery which attracts many visitors. Now may be seen carriages winding among the circuitous avenues which lead to the last resting places of the dead; and here and there silent groups of relatives and friends of the departed loved ones, reviving sad memories, or coming to strew the cherished spot with flowers.

By the mid-twentieth century, the City Cemetery had fallen into disrepair. In 1940, construction of the NewHelvetia Housing Project on Muir Way took land from the Cemetery. In 1949, construction associated with the widening of Broadway led to the removal of the historic entry gate, lodging, and bell tower. The California State Historic Landmarks Commission designated the City Cemetery as a California Historical Landmark in 1957. Five years later, in 1962, the city sold a large parcel of the Cemetery to the Masonic Lawn Association, which resulted in its current boundaries and reduced its site to the current 44 acres. (source: SHCC Master Plan, p. 26) By the 1980s, concerned citizens organized the Old City Cemetery Committee (OCCC) to address the Cemetery's then relatively poor condition. In 2002, OCCC became an independent nonprofit organization.

Today, Sacramento's Historic City Cemetery is enjoying a revival and new life as a cultural attraction, having successfully transitioned from its' 1980s neglect to a vibrant community resource. Tours and other interpretive events are popular public attractions, as is the Sacramento Historic Rose Garden – the site's collection of old, antique roses, with some dating from the Gold-Rush era. Conceived and established by Fred Boutin – an internationally-recognized rosarian – and Jean Travis, the Historic Rose Garden represents those roses popular from the Gold Rush through the Victorian era, a period lasting from 1849-1915. Found throughout the Cemetery, the roses that compose the Historic Rose Garden represent a late-twentieth century representation of the global inundation of the Gold Rush, building upon the tradition of plantings being introduced into the cemetery plots, which started in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Many plants in bloom today at the City Cemetery were planted in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, originating from such far-off places as China and France, while others were carefully carried westward by overland migrants, then planted in California.

Criterion A: Social History

Sacramento's Historic City Cemetery is eligible for listing in the National Register at the state level of significance in the area of Social History for its association with the Sacramento's Gold-Rush era origins and society and the city's development, including becoming the State Capitol. The Cemetery serves as the final resting place for thousands of early Californians, ranging from former California Governors, such as Newton Booth, and other notable elected officials, to

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prominent entrepreneurs like Mark Hopkins, one of the financiers responsible for the first transcontinental railroad. Those who died from illness, injury and natural causes populate the cemetery, including hundreds from Sacramento's early Chinese community. Entire families, including a number of children, are buried there, along with prostitutes and those who died in battle. The diversity of those buried in the City Cemetery is truly representative of the Gold-Rush experience. As the *Sacramento Bee* reported in 1955, "A tour of Sacramento's City Cemetery . . . has the effect of turning back the pages of history, a solemn reminder of California's hectic childhood." As character-defining features of the site, the array of monuments and headstones – some modest and others elaborate – along with mass graves and mausoleums, help to demonstrate further the range of experience in Gold Rush California, both in terms of wealth and culture. The Cemetery is a reminder of life in early Sacramento – a place where thousands flocked for the promise of new beginnings, and where death by illness, violent, or sudden disaster was not uncommon. Sacramento's Historic City Cemetery is the final resting place for thousands of individuals who shaped the history of Sacramento, California, and the West. From its beginnings, and continuing through its history, diverse populations were buried in the Cemetery, representing Sacramento's rich and diverse cultures and their contributions to its history.

**Criterion A: Community Planning & Development**

Sacramento's Historic City Cemetery is eligible for listing in the National Register at the state level of significance in the area of Community Planning & Development for its association with Sacramento's Gold Rush-era development and the creation of a city. The City Cemetery is one of the oldest planned cemeteries in California. Furthermore, as one of the city's first publically-mandated and managed urban amenities, the City Cemetery sheds light on the city-building objectives brought by new arrivals to Sacramento and the role government played in the process. During the Gold Rush, land owners and city officials in Sacramento, eager to take advantage of the area's access to river transportation, chose to take advantage of the natural environment to stabilize and grow their city. Even still, the site's natural tendency to flood led Sacramentans to adopt various public works projects which permanently altered the landscape. Led by the local government, citizens willingly taxed themselves to construct a levee system, re-route the flood-prone American River, and finance a massive street-raising project. These projects helped to stabilize and protect the city from challenges posed by the original natural landscape. Because Sacramento possessed such an "uncooperative" landscape, city officials strategically chose the sandy knoll outside the city as the site for a cemetery in 1849. After the city began to design the Cemetery's site for use, they adapted to the site's topography in order to preserve the benefit of high ground. The result is a significant cultural landscape that physically demonstrates how the City Cemetery was designed with flood-protection in mind. As such, the City Cemetery's planning and development represents the substantial role, with intervals of neglect, that the local government played in the planning and growth of Sacramento, while also providing an example for how that growth was achieved – by negotiating the natural landscape to achieve urban development.

**Criterion B: Associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.**

Sacramento's Historic City Cemetery is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B at the State level of significance through its association with the lives of persons significant in Sacramento's past. Many of these individuals came to Sacramento during the Gold Rush

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and made significant contributions to the building and permanence of the city of Sacramento. The site meets the requirements of Criteria Consideration C because there are no other sites associated with these city pioneers, philanthropists, and politicians except their graves in the City Cemetery, except for Margaret Crocker. Margaret Crocker was directly associated with the growth and improvement of the City Cemetery during her lifetime, and thus does not have to meet the requirements of Criteria Consideration C.

The cemetery serves as the final resting place of Sacramento's city founder, John A. Sutter, Jr., Sacramento's first elected mayor, Hardin Bigelow, and several California Governors, including John Bigler, and Newton Booth. It also includes numerous state and local political, civic, and business leaders. These include Albert M. Winn, who was elected to Sacramento's first City Council in 1849, Mark Hopkins, one of the "Big Four" builders of the Central Pacific Railroad, as well as pioneers and members of fraternal organizations. Also, the cemetery serves as the final resting place of amateur horticulturalist, Margaret Crocker, who constructed a conservatory outside the cemetery gates, and helped establish the site's historic horticultural legacy. In 1880, she also donated more land for the cemetery and increased its size to nearly 60 acres. The cemetery includes a wide range of Sacramentans who helped shape the city, the state, and the western United States. As an assemblage of gravesites of individuals of transcendent importance, the site is nominated at the national level of significance under Criterion B.

**John Augustus Sutter Jr.**

Sacramento owes its name and location to the Gold Rush and John A. Sutter Jr.

John Augustus Sutter, Jr., the twenty-two year old son of Sutter's Fort founder, John Sutter, arrived in California from Switzerland in September 1848. Upon the young Sutter's arrival to California, however, he discovered that the father he had not seen in over ten years was mired in debt with no way of meeting his obligations. In order to escape his creditors, the senior Sutter signed his property over to his son. This included two large land grants issued to him by the Mexican government in 1839. One of the grants included the land at the junction of the Sacramento and American Rivers. After signing over his property, John Sutter Sr. left for the gold fields of Coloma leaving his son in charge of his land, finances, and financial burdens.

Soon after the transfer of ownership some merchants (including Sam Brannan and Peter Burnett) approached John Sutter Jr. and suggested he plat out a new city at the Sacramento River's riverfront, just south of its' confluence with the American River. They wanted to build their businesses at the trade routes established at the river and the point at which new arrivals disembarked before leaving for the gold fields. They convinced the young Sutter that if he built a city at that location, he could make enough money to pay off his father's debts. The river location went against the earlier plans that John Sutter Sr. had made for building a city. He had long planned on building a city away from the flood plain, a few miles south and west from Sutter's Fort, and naming it "Suterville." The Gold Rush changed those plans.

In his father's absence, John Sutter Jr. hired a team of engineers to survey and plat the land located at the riverfront. The team consisted of Captain William H. Warner, Lieutenant William T. Sherman (future Civil War general), and Lieutenant Edward O.C. Ord (future Civil War general and California's Fort Ord is named for him). The resulting plan produced a traditional American city street grid with numbered north-south streets and lettered east-west streets. The city started at Front Street and extended nearly

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three miles east from the Sacramento River. By December 1848, Sutter hired Peter H. Burnett to take charge of selling the lots as his land agent. Burnett was an attorney who was familiar with frontier land sales; he was later elected California's first elected governor.

With the sale of the first lot, the city of Sacramento was founded. John Sutter Jr. called the new town "Sacramento City" for its location on the Sacramento River. By April 1849, Burnett sold enough property to pay off all of John Sutter Jr's father's debt. The merchants were pleased with their business locations and Sutter Jr. was satisfied that he rescued his father's finances. The elder Sutter, however, was furious with his son's enterprise. Sutter Sr. still favored his original plan for Sutterville, and believed it would have flourished if the merchants had not convinced his son to start a rival city. "Had I not been snow-bound at Coloma that winter," Sutter groused, "Sac[ramento] never would have been built."<sup>2</sup>

John Sutter never forgave his son for building the city at the river. John Sutter Jr. left Sacramento in 1850. He moved to Acapulco, Mexico, where he lived the rest of his life passing away September 21, 1897. With the permission of his only child, Anna Sutter Young, his remains were reinterred March 11, 1964 in Sacramento. Because he never settled in the city he founded, with the exception of the central city's street grid which he caused to be laid out, the only building, structure or site relating to the life of John Augustus Jr., founder of California's state capital city, is his grave in the Historic Old City Cemetery.

**Albert M. Winn**

Albert Maver Winn worked to establish a new city government for Sacramento and was founder of the fraternal service organization, Native Sons of the Golden West.

The establishment of law and order became one of the city's most pressing issues at the onset of the Gold Rush. California was not yet a state, nor even a territory. The alcalde system that had been in place while California was under Mexican rule did not offer the strong authority the rapidly growing city required. Sacramento needed a functioning government.

In July 1849, city residents elected nine men to a new city council, and they elected A.M. Winn president. Winn was a general land agent and political leader who worked to establish a new city government for Sacramento; he was the first president of the first city council. The council's first task was to draft a city charter and submit it for voter approval. Under his leadership, residents approved a city charter in October of that year.

When the gold seekers who traveled the overland route to California started arriving in 1849, many arrived too sick or weak to pursue gold mining. A.M. Winn noted that "hundreds are lying sick, rolled in their filthy blankets, without wife, children or friends to nurse them while sick or bury them when dead."<sup>3</sup> They needed time to recover and convalesce, but the city lacked enough drinking water and sanitation services to care for them. Fearing a public health crisis, A.M. Winn organized the first Odd Fellows

<sup>2</sup> Albert L. Hurtado, *John Sutter: A Life on the North American Frontier*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006), 244; Eifler, Mark A. *Gold Rush Capitalists: Greed and Growth in Sacramento*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002; Thor Severson, *Sacramento An Illustrated History: 1839-1874 From Sutter's Fort to Capital City*. California Historical Society, 1973.

<sup>3</sup> Mark A. Eifler, *Gold Rush Capitalists: Greed and Growth in Sacramento*. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002), 87

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Lodge on the West Coast and established Grace Church, the first Episcopal Church in Sacramento to help deal with the crisis.

Albert M. Winn served in the Mississippi Militia, reaching the rank of colonel, and in 1850 was appointed Brigadier-General of the California state militia by Governor Peter Burnett (John Sutter Jr.'s land agent) and in August of 1850 placed the City of Sacramento under martial law in the wake of the Squatter's Riot (see entry under Hardin Bigelow.)<sup>4</sup>

In 1875, Winn founded the Native Sons of the Golden West. Throughout the last century the Native Sons were instrumental in protecting historical sites in California, beginning with the preservation of Sutter's Fort in 1890. Today, the Native Sons and Daughters of the Golden West devote themselves to educational and charitable endeavors.

Albert M. Winn contributed to the civil and military beginnings of Sacramento, but no buildings, structures or sites survive as a direct testament to his contribution to Sacramento's history. A.M. Winn died on August 23, 1883. The Native Sons erected a twenty-five-foot-high monument on his grave in 1888.

### **Hardin Bigelow**

Hardin Bigelow was Sacramento's first elected mayor. He only held office for 7 months, but was instrumental in establishing the city's levee system for flood protection. He died as an indirect result of the Sacramento "Squatter's Riot," an armed conflict between Gold Rush settlers and Sacramento's early business community.

In January 1850, the Sacramento River overflowed its banks and flooded the new city. Historian Mark Eifler observes that this took city residents by surprise. "Despite the city's low elevation, the long rainfall, and the increasing rise in the Sacramento and American rivers for days before the flood," he writes, "most residents had believed in the claims of the city's founders that the site was not subject to flooding."<sup>5</sup> The flood struck the city hard and the waters remained high for over a week. By January 18th, the waters finally receded to their pre-flood level. The flood killed hundreds of livestock, and destroyed lives and businesses in the process. The city council, however, refused to take steps to protect the city from future flooding.

By spring, frustrated residents met in opposition to the city council's lack of action. They advocated for the building of a new levee to protect the city. Hardin Bigelow, a businessman and landholder, led the effort to build the levee. While the council reluctantly agreed with the levee committee's findings, it delayed taking action to build the levee. By the end of March, spring rain and the melting Sierra snow-pack caused the river to swell again to flood stage. Hardin Bigelow hired his own work crew. He and other volunteers worked through the night to build a makeshift levee. Their plan worked, and

<sup>4</sup> Kibbey, Mead B., "A History of Sacramento to 1851," printed in the facsimile reproduction of J. Horace Culver's *Sacramento City Directory for the year 1851*, California State Library Foundation, Sacramento, 2000, p. 168-171.

<sup>5</sup> Mark A. Eifler, *Gold Rush Capitalists: Greed and Growth in Sacramento*. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002), 95; Thor Severson, *Sacramento An Illustrated History: 1839 to 1874, From Sutter's Fort to Capital City*. California Historical Society, 1973



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Sacramentans credited Bigelow with saving the town from a second flood. In April, grateful city residents overwhelmingly elected Bigelow their first mayor.

Bigelow worked hard on behalf of the city. In addition to the construction of a permanent levee, Bigelow advocated for the improvements the city needed: establishment of fire companies, improved city sanitation, construction of a city hospital and prison, street grading, and construction of bridges and sidewalks. The only way to accomplish the work was by raising taxes. The council agreed and authorized the use of property taxes; city improvements proceeded rapidly thereafter.

Sacramento had another issue that boiled over during the summer of 1850. It concerned property owners and the price of land. Land speculation drove the price of property to exorbitant levels. New residents questioned Sutter's legal ownership of the land and complained about the inflated prices; in protest, they squatted on the land and claimed proprietorship. In August, the hostility between property owners and squatters erupted into violence that would be known as the "Squatter's Riot". On August 14, 1850, a party of 30 armed squatters under the leadership of Mexican War veteran James Maloney retook a house seized by Sacramento County sheriff Joseph McKinney at 2<sup>nd</sup> and L Street, and marched toward the prison brig *La Grange*, a permanently moored ship on the Sacramento River used as a city jail, where James McClatchy and Michael Moran, members of the squatter faction, were imprisoned.

Mayor Bigelow led a second group to meet the squatters, calling for support to the general public who gathered arms of their own, along with Sheriff McKinney. The two groups met at Fourth and J Street, where Maloney ordered his group to fire, and was heard to say "Shoot the mayor!" Sheriff McKinney, county assessor James M. Woodland, squatter Jesse Morgan, squatter leader James Maloney, and one identified man were killed at the site. Mayor Bigelow was shot but not killed during the melee.<sup>6</sup>

In the aftermath of the riot, Mayor Bigelow was wounded four times. Infection set in and doctors amputated his arm. Three months later, while recovering from his wounds in San Francisco, Bigelow contracted cholera and died. He was buried alongside Sheriff Maloney in a temporary gravesite in the New Helvetia Cemetery at 31<sup>st</sup> and J Street, but both were relocated to the Old City Cemetery when the New Helvetia cemetery was abandoned. The short time Bigelow spent in Sacramento had a profound effect on the permanent establishment of the city, but there are now no sites, buildings, or other direct manifestations of Bigelow's life other than his gravesite in the Historic Old City Cemetery.

### **John Bigler**

John Bigler was the third governor of California. He came to California from Cumberland County, Pennsylvania for the Gold Rush. Instead of gold, he found his calling in politics. The state's new residents elected Bigler to the State Assembly in October 1849. The following year, he served as speaker.

In the summer of 1851, the Democratic Party nominated Bigler for governor and he became California's 3<sup>rd</sup> governor. He was re-elected by a small margin two years later, but in 1855 J. Neely Johnson ran on the "Know Nothing" ticket and defeated Bigler in his bid for a third term.

<sup>6</sup> Kibbey, Mead B., "A History of Sacramento to 1851," printed in the facsimile reproduction of J. Horace Culver's *Sacramento City Directory for the year 1851*, California State Library Foundation, Sacramento, 2000, p. 80-82.

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Bigler's accomplishments during his tenure in office included revising the state hospital and prison systems, making Sacramento the permanent state capital, and the establishment of 221 schools in California.

After Bigler participated in an expedition to save a group of snow-bound emigrants trapped in the Sierra, the 1854 State Legislature honored him by naming Bigler Lake after him. When his pro-Southern sympathies were revealed during the Civil War, many supported re-naming Bigler Lake. They chose the Indian name of "Tahoe," but the legislature did not officially re-name the lake until 1945.

President James Buchanan appointed Bigler as the United States minister to Chile in 1857. Ten years later, he was appointed to the Federal Railroad Commission. Bigler was one of the founders of the *State Capitol Reporter*, where he served as the paper's editor until his death. Bigler was ill for several months before he died of dropsy in 1871 at age of 66. There are no other extant direct manifestations of Bigler's life except his grave in the Historic Old City Cemetery.

**Newton Booth**

Newton Booth was a lawyer, writer, businessman, and politician. Throughout his career as State Senator (1863), Governor of California (1871-1875), and United States Senator (1875-1881), Newton Booth exerted substantial influence in California and the country.

From 1865-1893, his firm, Booth and Co., owned buildings located at 1013-1021 Front Street. Booth operated one of the largest interstate grocery firms on the Pacific Coast, Booth and Co., from this location.

Booth maintained his residence at numbers 1015 and 1017 Front Street. His elaborately furnished home served as the Governor's mansion during his administration and was the scene of elaborate receptions and social events attended by notable actors, artists, and authors. General William T. Sherman, General Ulysses S. Grant, President Rutherford B. Hayes, and President William H. Harrison were among the many guests Booth entertained. Newspapers stated that Booth's Front Street mansion featured a ballroom large enough for 1,000 people to dance. Newton Booth lived there from 1866 until his death in 1892.

Booth's residence burned down before World War II. The buildings that remain on the site are reconstructed, but are not the original buildings. With the absence of the grand residence that served as Governor's Mansion, the only extant direct manifestation of Newton Booth's life is the reconstructed Front Street building and his grave in the Old City Cemetery.

**Mark Hopkins**

Mark Hopkins was one of the "Associates" who started the Central Pacific Railroad, later known as the "Big Four," including Charles Crocker, Leland Stanford and Collis P. Huntington.

Hopkins came to California in 1849 for the Gold Rush. He was in his late thirties and older than many of the men who made the same journey in search of gold. Hopkins quickly became disillusioned with mining. The gold was not easy to access and the task of extracting it was strenuous and back-breaking. "It is outright folly," he complained in an 1850 letter to his brother, Moses, "for merchants, clerks—mere indoor men—to think of working with their hands in the mines—The daily tasks of the Irish laborer on

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your canals and Rail Roads is VERY easy work compared to it.”<sup>7</sup>

Hopkins established a small grocery business with Edward H. Miller in Sacramento, but when the fire of 1852 destroyed their business, Hopkins partnered with Collis P. Huntington. The men opened the Huntington Hopkins Hardware Business in 1855. Their hardware business quickly grew into one of the largest on the west coast.

Hopkins handled the books, and his attention to business matters was flawless. "I never thought anything finished until Hopkins had seen it," Huntington said. "He had general supervision of the books and the papers, contracts, etc. When he said they were right, I never cared to look at them.”<sup>8</sup>

Mark Hopkins and Collis P. Huntington founded the Central Pacific Railroad in 1861 along with Leland Stanford and Charles Crocker. Today, they are collectively known as the “Big Four.” Thoughtful, quiet, and frugal, Hopkins served as the railroad’s treasurer. The great venture to build the nation’s first transcontinental railroad kicked off to a ceremonial start in January 1863 with a ground-breaking ceremony in Sacramento. Hopkins’ renowned attention to detail helped make the project a success. On May 10, 1869, the Central Pacific Railroad joined with the Union Pacific Railroad at Promontory Summit, Utah, thus completing the nation’s first transcontinental railroad.

Mark Hopkins’ Sacramento and San Francisco homes were destroyed by redevelopment and earthquake. There is a reconstruction of the Huntington-Hopkins Hardware store within the Old Sacramento Historic District, but the building does not occupy its original location at 54 K Street. The original building was deconstructed with the construction of the Interstate 5 freeway through Sacramento in the mid-1960s, and the reconstruction is located several blocks away. Surviving Central Pacific Railroad properties from Hopkins’ lifetime are not directly associated with Hopkins, as he served as treasurer and bookkeeper to the railroad, not construction, operation or maintenance, thus existing shops, railroad alignments and station facilities do not retain direct association with Hopkins. As such, his gravesite at the Old City Cemetery is a property of national significance.

**Margaret Crocker**

Margaret Crocker was a leading community figure and generous philanthropist, supporting numerous charitable causes in Sacramento. Margaret bestowed the Crocker family art collection and gallery to the nascent California Museum Association (CMA) and the city of Sacramento, the first museum west of the Mississippi. She also built a conservatory devoted to horticulture for the city cemetery and donated 23 acres of land to the city for the expansion of the city cemetery.

Margaret came to Sacramento with her husband, Edwin, in 1852. Edwin Bryant (E.B.) Crocker served as legal counsel for the Central Pacific Railroad and was a California Supreme Court Justice. Margaret and Edwin were known for their European travels and the collecting of art along the way. Margaret was also known for her gardens at their home. After her husband’s death in 1875, Margaret managed the family estate. She donated much of the family fortune to people in need by giving to schools, churches, and orphanages. The Crocker family home in Sacramento became the Marguerite Home, a home for

<sup>7</sup> Mark, Eifler, *Gold Rush Capitalists: Greed and Growth in Sacramento*. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002), 169.

<sup>8</sup> American Experience, “Transcontinental Railroad, Biography: Collis P. Huntington.” Accessed 27 August 2013. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/biography/tcrr-huntington/>.

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aged women without other means of support, and the Crocker family art gallery adjacent to their home was donated, along with its art collection, to the city of Sacramento in 1885.

Besides the donation of the art gallery, Margaret Crocker's donation of 23 acres of land to the City for "cemetery purposes" is one of her most enduring contributions to the city of Sacramento. This 1880 gift greatly enhanced the cemetery and brought the total acreage to 60 acres. She cared deeply for the cemetery and its atmosphere. Two years prior to the land gift, Margaret commissioned the construction of the Bell Conservatory to encourage growth and experimentation with exotic plants and flowers. She wanted the conservatory to enhance the cemetery's landscaping and to provide free flowers for the city's poor to set on the graves of their loved ones. On May 6, 1885, the city showed its appreciation to Margaret Crocker by arranging a grand floral festival to pay tribute to her generosity. The event drew more than 15,000 visitors. Unfortunately, the city razed the conservatory in the 1950s, but her contribution demonstrates the extent of her care for the City Cemetery.

Margaret Crocker died in New York in 1901, but her family interred her ashes in the city to which she gave so much. The enhanced cemetery is her lasting legacy. There are other surviving sites associated with Margaret Crocker, including the Crocker Art Museum and Home, but her association with the cemetery is based on events that took place during her lifetime as an active patron and supporter of the cemetery's beautification and maintenance. Thus, her association does not have to meet the requirements of Criteria Consideration C.

**Criterion C: Cemetery architecture.**

Sacramento's Historic City Cemetery is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C for its landscape architecture and design. The City Cemetery is divided into multiple sections, including many plots devoted to civic, service, and fraternal organizations that constitute contributing sites to the overall cemetery district. The groups to which these individuals belonged significantly improved the lives of people living in a city trying to cope with the simultaneous issues of extreme growth and calamitous disasters. The fraternal sections of the cemetery contribute to the architectural elements of the cemetery and are significant as expressions of cemetery design and function. Sacramento pioneers, volunteer firemen, and fraternal organizations settled the city, saved it from destruction, and tended to the needs of thousands of sick and helpless people who lived in Sacramento during the stressful period of development. Military sections of the cemetery commemorate and honor the service of Sacramentans who were members of the armed forces, starting with veterans of the Civil War through the World Wars, Korea and Vietnam. The cemetery as a whole is a designed landscape with identifiable features documented at the end of this section. The site of the cemetery was chosen for its high ground above flood level, but the current cemetery expresses a rational design methodology with distinct subsections identified as sites in the narrative below. This context also identifies the Sacramento City Cemetery as the oldest "gardenesque" cemetery in the western United States, with unique design features that separate it from contemporary "rural" designed cemeteries of the era.

**Historic Context: American Cemetery Design**

When placed in the context of America's earliest planned cemeteries, the significance of Historic City Cemetery's particular site design, development and function as a Western cemetery are made clear. In early American towns and cities, church yards and town greens served as the primary places of burial. As these burial grounds reached capacity, concerns about health risks surfaced throughout the country,

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leading communities to develop planned cemeteries with specified burial plots. The first of these was in New Haven, Connecticut in 1796. By the early 19<sup>th</sup>-century, sentimentality, hope, and benevolence shaped Americans' views on death and mortality. As such, cemeteries were places to visit and gain inspiration, as well as places to mourn. They were characterized by pleasant landscapes, curving pathways, and emotionally-expressive architecture.

By 1849, when Sacramento established its City Cemetery, roughly 10 planned cemeteries existed across the country, making that in Sacramento among the oldest planned cemeteries in the nation. Even still, Sacramento's City Cemetery was not typical for its time. The more prevalent "rural" cemeteries gained popularity across the nation, fast becoming recreational attractions. In places outside the West that were already highly urbanized and densely populated, "rural" cemeteries were privately-developed, money-making enterprises, marketed to city-dwellers as an escape from the stresses of urban living and as an opportunity to enjoy a more "natural" environment. Conversely, Sacramento's City Cemetery was designed to ensure control over many aspects of nature, and has always been a public owned, municipally operated cemetery. Early arrivals to the city were faced with a natural landscape that often interfered with their efforts to establish a permanent settlement.

A "rural" setting was of little interest to early city leaders in Sacramento. Sacramento's City Cemetery was designed in the "rational," rather than "rural" style. Much like the newly-established and rapidly-growing city of Sacramento, the City Cemetery was designed on a grid, with straight roads, pathways and rectangular plots. Such a design choice suggested that city leaders desired to impose order on the frontier's "unruly" or "untamed" wilderness – a guiding theme in American Western history. Sacramento's City Cemetery was more than an entrepreneurial endeavor meant to provide an escape for its patrons: it was a young city's attempt to develop a growth-inducing and community-stabilizing amenity. Cultural landscape elements of the City Cemetery are identified in Section 7.

**The Sacramento City Cemetery in Historical Context of American Cemeteries**

(Note: This section is reproduced from *Sacramento Historic City Cemetery Master Plan*, December 2007, prepared for the City of Sacramento Convention, Culture and Leisure Department, prepared by Royston Hanamoto Alley & Abbey Landscape Architects and Planners.)

In early American towns and cities, church yards and town greens were the only locations for burials. Over time, these burial grounds reached capacity and concerns over them causing health problems increased. Yellow fever epidemics in 1794 and 1795 caused a crisis in New Haven, Connecticut where the New Haven Green overflowed with the dead. In 1796, the city planned a new cemetery on the edge of town. This land, The New Burying Ground (now known as the Grove Street Cemetery), was the first planned cemetery landscape in the United States. Rather than the arbitrary burial layout that was common practice at the time, the New Burying Ground was divided into plots for families. Areas were also set aside for parishioners of churches, Yale College, the indigent, and persons of color.

The motives for creating The New Burying Ground in New Haven, overcrowded urban burial grounds and health concerns, led to the creation of other pioneering cemeteries across America. While health concerns may have some validity, this concern arose from the common, but incorrect, fear of disease-causing "miasmas" created from rotting corpses. During the early Nineteenth Century, America's views on death and mortality changed. The severe views on death and mortality of Puritanism and Calvinism were being replaced with sentimentality, hope, and benevolence. This led to the idea that cemeteries

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were places to visit loved ones, mourn, and gain inspiration. Where old burial grounds were crowded with simple markers, new cemeteries were pleasant landscapes with architectural expressions of sentimentality. These cemeteries demonstrated a range of emotions from melancholy to whimsy and humor.

Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts is the first example of this new type of cemetery. Established in 1831 by the public-spirited Massachusetts Horticultural Society, the goal was to create a well-designed cemetery to sooth the bereaved and to inspire future generations. The cemetery was created in a picturesque landscape of forested hills and wetlands with winding roads and paths. The design concept was modeled after the Père-Lachaise Cemetery in Paris, which was created in 1804 on a former estate. While Mount Auburn was the first of America's "rural" cemeteries, over time, Mount Auburn evolved from a picturesque, forested landscape to a gardenesque landscape with an emphasis on horticultural plantings. Rural cemeteries quickly gained popularity across America. Other early examples include Laurel Hill Cemetery in Philadelphia (1836), Greenwood Cemetery in Brooklyn (1838), Holly-Wood Cemetery in Richmond, Virginia (1848), and Forest Lawn Cemetery in Buffalo (1849). Within a short time, these cemeteries became extremely popular places for people to visit, whether they were mourning loved ones or not. There was an undeniable attraction to stroll through these pleasant landscapes, which had previously only been available on private estates. The rural cemetery phenomenon quickly led to the creation of New York's Central Park in 1858, and the American parks movement.

**The City Cemetery in Context: A Timeline of Other Early Cemeteries**

1789 St. Louis Cemetery, New Orleans, LA. Burials in above ground vaults due to high ground water.  
1796 New Burying Ground (later Grove Street Cemetery), New Haven, CT. First chartered burial ground in United States.

1804 Père-Lachaise Cemetery, Paris, France. Model for Mt. Auburn.

1831 Mount Auburn Cemetery – Cambridge, MA. First large designed landscape open to the public in US. 175 acres.

1832 Kensal Green Cemetery – London, England.

1836 Laurel Hill Cemetery – Philadelphia, PA.

1838 Green-Wood Cemetery – Brooklyn, New York.

1839 Highgate Cemetery – London, England.

1845 Spring Grove Cemetery – Cincinnati, OH.

1848 Holly-Wood Cemetery – Richmond, VA.

1849 City Cemetery – Sacramento, CA.

1849 Bellefontaine Cemetery, St. Louis, MO.

1849 Forest Lawn Cemetery – Buffalo, New York. 269 acres. 152,000 graves.

1850 Oakland Cemetery – Atlanta, GA. 88 acres.

1860 Graceland Cemetery – Chicago, IL.

1863 Mountain View Cemetery – Oakland, CA. 226 acres. Designed by Frederick Law Olmsted.

1877 Evergreen Cemetery – Los Angeles. Oldest existing cemetery in Los Angeles. Very large – 300,000 grave sites.

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**A Cemetery for Sacramento**

The need for a proper cemetery in Sacramento began in 1849 with a committee of the Sacramento Common Council, tasked with finding a site for the cemetery. In a settlement mostly within the river floodplain, A good site for a cemetery would be one that was high and dry. They found such a site on a sandy knoll, well above the flood plain, at the south edge of the recently mapped city. The committee approached the land owners, John Augustus Sutter and H.A. Schoolcraft, who generously agreed to donate 10 acres for the cemetery. Previously, most burials were done at a burial ground at Sutter's Fort, but this site was less than ideal due to its susceptibility to flooding. Other burials had been done at a sandy mound known as Buckeye Knoll, two blocks north of City Cemetery. This site, which was commonly used as a source of sand for city builders, was less than ideal because it was within the city street grid and was thought not large enough for future needs.

At the time, Sacramento was in rapid transformation from an agricultural settlement to the second largest city on the West Coast in the wake of the discovery of gold. In December of 1848, William Warner and William Tecumseh Sherman, surveyed and established Sacramento's grid of streets. In 1849, Sacramento's city government was formed with the adoption of the second City Charter. The public and civic needs of the city included a new burial ground. The city trustees established "the public graveyard" on December 3, 1849 when it passed an ordinance accepting John Sutter's gift of land. In 1850 a cholera epidemic hit Sacramento, killing almost a thousand people in about three weeks. Many of the victims were buried in mass graves in Sacramento's original burial ground near Sutter's Fort, but were later transferred to the City Cemetery due to flooding. During its early years the cemetery had minimal development. The graves were simple, often marked only with carved wooden grave markers. Plots were commonly enclosed with small picket fences. An engraving and description of the cemetery in its early years was published in the Sacramento Union on May 1, 1852;

*The cemetery is on the highest ground in the vicinity of the city, and commands an unobstructed view of the Sacramento, the Coast Range, the Sierra Nevada, and the city itself. The hill is composed of sand and every portion of it is pare above high-water mark, which circumstances render it a peculiarly favorable location for a cemetery. The friends and relatives of many of the deceased buried in these grounds, have exhibited their love and remembrance for the departed, by adorning and beautifying their graves by the planting of shrubbery, and the erection of neat and substantial palings.*

Formal development of the cemetery was delayed until the hiring of a superintendent in 1856. This was reportedly prompted by complaints of the poor condition of the cemetery. A formal design of lots and tiers was established and sections were acquired by families and groups including the Freemasons, the Odd Fellows, Volunteer Firemen and the Pioneers Society. Carriage Ways divided the cemetery into sections. A gate house with bell tower and lodge were constructed circa 1857 at the 10th Street entry. The hillsides were terraced with brick and stone walls to create level burial plots. The cemetery expanded to 60 acres in 1880 with the donation of additional land by Margaret Crocker. In 1893, the city constructed a stone mortuary chapel. The city designed its cemetery in a rational way, with neat rows of plots divided by paths and framed by carriage ways. This was quite different from the trend of other cemeteries in the East. Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts started the "rural" cemetery movement, characterized by a picturesque or naturalistic landscape setting with winding pathways. Most of the other major cemeteries that predate the City Cemetery were created in this fashion. The notable exception is the New Burying Ground in New Haven, Connecticut (1796), the first purpose-built cemetery in the United States. Like the City Cemetery, it was organized in a rational form,

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with plots in straight rows. New Burying Ground and the City Cemetery are also unique in that they are both municipal-owned cemeteries. Almost all of the other significant cemeteries were privately developed and owned.

Currently, we do not have records explaining why City Cemetery took this form. We can only speculate the reasons, including that the western frontier ethic called for a more rational design. At the time of City Cemetery's creation, Sacramento was a newly established town in a riparian setting, so the need and desire for a "rural" experience likely did not exist. All of the cities with "rural" cemeteries were much larger than Sacramento, which in 1850, had a population of only about 10,000 (compared to Cincinnati, population 115,000, and Richmond, Virginia, population 28,000). Another factor is that the "rural" cemeteries, being privately developed, were a speculative business model that relied on marketing to attract potential buyers of plots. The park-like setting proved very popular and was successful in selling plots. City Cemetery, like the other cemeteries around the country, attracted visitors, particularly on Sundays. In these days before urban parks, people visited cemeteries, not just to visit their departed loved ones, but to walk and ride in the pleasant surroundings the cemeteries provided. The Sacramento Bee of February 10, 1860 noted this phenomenon:

*At this season of the year, before the rough ocean winds of the Summer months have commenced to blow, there is a quiet beauty about our metropolitan Cemetery which attracts many visitors. Now may be seen carriages winding among the circuitous avenues which lead to the last resting places of the dead; and here and there silent groups of relatives and friends of the departed loved ones, reviving sad memories, or coming to strew the cherished spot with flowers.*

The horticultural importance at the City Cemetery began in 1878 when "Mrs. Margaret Crocker built the Bell Conservatory at a cost of \$38,000. This structure overlooked the cemetery along what is now Broadway and was used to grow flowers for use in the cemetery. Mrs. Crocker's plan was to sell flowers to those who could afford them and give them to those who could not so that all could decorate the graves of relatives in the City Cemetery across the street. Colored glass, which once made the Bell Conservatory a thing to behold, was ordered through Tiffany's in New York and shipped from Belgium. The spot was later bought by Safeway and is now a parking lot."<sup>9</sup>

The cemetery includes a number of fraternal sections. This started in 1859 with the Masons, in what is now known as the "Old Masonic Cemetery." The trend continued with the Odd Fellows in 1861, and the Sacramento Pioneers Association in 1862. Other fraternal organizations represented include the Improved Order of Redmen, the United Ancient Order of Druids, and the Sacramento Turn Verein. The city also donated sections to honor volunteer firemen (1858) and Civil War veterans of the Grand Army of the Republic (1878). Labor organizations with plots for burial of members include the Printers' Union and the Painters' Union. Between 1850 and 1855 there were approximately 3,000 burials in the new cemetery in what was later known as the "old tier grounds". In 1856 the cemetery was redesigned with a new layout, carriage ways, and plots for sale. Most of the area of the "old tier grounds" was resold as plots. It is not clear whether the earlier burials were removed as part of the reorganization, or if they were left in place. Starting in 1875, parts of the City Cemetery were sold to the Masons and Odd Fellows, who created their own cemeteries on the land. These cemeteries are classic examples of the later "lawn-park" cemeteries, which are characterized by large expanses of lawn. The "lawn-park" cemeteries reflected a growing professionalization of cemetery management, where there was greater

<sup>9</sup> Source: [http://www.oldcitycemetery.com/bell\\_consv.htm](http://www.oldcitycemetery.com/bell_consv.htm)



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control over the landscape. In addition, lawns were easier to maintain than the complex picturesque and gardenesque landscapes of the "rural" cemeteries.

At the same time he donated the land for the City Cemetery in 1849, John Sutter also donated an additional 10 acres of land at Alhambra and J Street which was known as the Sutter's Fort Burial Ground. This land became the New Helvetia Cemetery. It operated until the 1950s when all remains were removed, some of which were reinterred in City Cemetery [and some in East Lawn Cemetery, located in East Sacramento.] The site is now Sutter Junior High School. Over the course of the 20th Century, the care and maintenance of City Cemetery diminished to the point of near-abandonment. In 1949, the 10th Street gate and entry were torn down to make way for the widening of Broadway. In 1986, concerned citizens organized the Old City Cemetery Committee in reaction to the deteriorating condition of the cemetery and growing vandalism. Over the recent years, the group has begun repairs and transformed and greened the cemetery. The primary map of the cemetery that is in use today dates from 1902. There would likely have been a number of earlier maps, which were particularly needed as the cemetery acquired new land, but the 1902 map is the only map that is known to be extant.

**Cemetery Timeline Including Notes on City Acquisition of Cemetery Properties**

(The following information was taken, in part, from a timeline prepared in May 1970 by Solon "Doc" Wisham, Jr., Director, Recreation and Parks.)

December 1848 – A grid of streets for Sacramento is surveyed and established by William Warner and William Tecumseh Sherman.

November 28, 1849 – John A. Sutter and H.A. Schoolcraft donated ten acres of land to the City of Sacramento, located south of "Y" Street, between 9th and 11th Streets, for the development of a cemetery.

December 3, 1849 – The City of Sacramento passed an ordinance establishing the City Cemetery and appointed a committee to layout the site and to sell family plots to the public.

Circa 1850 – The City Cemetery site was laid out by officials of the City of Sacramento, about the same time as the great cholera epidemic. The City Cemetery was referred to as "The Sand Hill Cemetery of our City."

June 12, 1851 – The Sacramento Union, in an editorial, complained about the maintenance standards of the City Cemetery and called on the City officials for corrections.

July 9, 1851 – The City acted to correct maintenance standards and purchased ten additional acres from John Claybrook for \$1,500.

December 24, 1855 – The City officially adopted the name "Evergreen Cemetery." The popular usage, however, continued to be "City Cemetery," as it is now used.

1856 – A cemetery superintendent is hired. A formal design of lots and tiers is established.

Circa 1857 – Gate house and chapel constructed at the 10th Street entry.

Circa 1858 – Several society and family plots had been established by this date. These plots were enclosed with brick and stone copings and retaining walls, all under private ownership.

April 26, 1866 – The City purchased another ten acres of land from Israel Luce for \$100.00, bringing the cemetery acreage to 30.

Circa 1875 – The City sold approximately 5.5 acres to the Masons, establishing the present Masonic Lawn Cemetery.

1878 – Bell Conservatory is built by Margaret Crocker across Y Street (Broadway) from the cemetery.

June 30, 1880 – Mrs. Margaret E. Crocker, widow of E.B. Crocker, donated 23 acres to the City for

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cemetery purposes, bringing the total to over 50 acres.

1893 – Stone mortuary chapel is constructed.

February 27, 1911 – The City purchased the Southside Cemetery for \$100.00 from the Tehama Lodge of the Masonic Order. This parcel of 2.07 acres was not contiguous to the existing cemetery and was used primarily for pauper burials.

Circa 1940 – The construction of the New Helvetia Housing Project and the development of Muir Way detached additional land from the City Cemetery.

1949 – Broadway is widened resulting in the demolition of the gatehouse and chapel.

October 12, 1955 to March 27, 1956 – All remains at the New Helvetia Cemetery were removed and distributed to other cemeteries. Remains with name markers, but unclaimed by heirs, were reinterred at City Cemetery.

May 5, 1957 – The Sacramento City Cemetery was designated as State Historic Landmark, No. 566, by the State Historical Landmarks Commission, under the sponsorship of the Native Sons of the Golden West and the Native Daughters of the Golden West.

February 9, 1962 – The City sold a 4' x 720' parcel to the Masonic Lawn Association. This sale enabled the Masons to enlarge their present holding capacity. This sale reduced the City's holdings to the existing 44 acres.

1986 – Concerned citizens organize the Old City Cemetery Committee (OCCC) to address the cemetery's poor condition and vandalism. 1987 – OCCC becomes a standing committee of the Sacramento County Historical Society.

January 2002 – OCCC becomes an independent nonprofit organization.

Circa 2002 – By City ordinance the official name is "Historic City Cemetery of the City of Sacramento."